



# PLAYER HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Vikings



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Version: Winter/Spring 2025



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# WELCOME MESSAGE

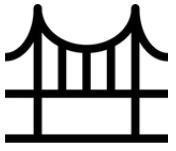
This handbook has been designed to inform of you of what it means to be a Viking soccer player. It also sets some expectations for you as a player, and for your family. This will be especially valuable as the club moves forward with development and identity.

We're excited you're with us!

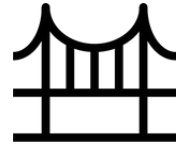
LEE DUNNE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





# VISION



The vision of the San Francisco Vikings Soccer Club is to shape a brighter future through youth sports.



# MISSION



San Francisco Vikings is dedicated to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and nurturing community committed to the holistic and long-term development of our players, parents, and coaches in youth soccer.



# TODAY



Today, San Francisco VIKINGS celebrates a century of soccer excellence, providing diverse programs for ages 5 and up. With a team of over 30 dedicated coaches, we've ignited the passion for soccer in thousands of San Francisco youth.

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# HISTORY



You are representing the same club that the gentlemen below are representing from the 1952-53 season. The club also goes back 30 more years to the first team in 1922. You are a part of soccer history in San Francisco!

Change is constant, but the Vikings have remained through all of these years with committed players, and by putting on the Viking jersey, you are pledging the same commitment.



# THE VIKING

## — WAY —

### **Respect & Sportsmanship**

Show respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials. Uphold good sportsmanship in all interactions on and off the field.

### **Acceptance & Discipline**

Accept the outcomes of games and club decisions with a positive attitude. Understand that failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct may lead to a review and disciplinary actions.

### **Communication**

Communicate respectfully with teammates and coaches. Address issues constructively.

### **Responsibility & Compliance**

Arrive on time for practices and games, be prepared, and adhere to team rules and guidelines.

### **Support & Engagement**

Engage fully in training and games. Handle success and setbacks with grace and enthusiasm.

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# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

OUR COACHING STAFF AIMS TO FACILITATE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GAME-BASED LEARNING METHODS THAT EMPOWER OUR ATHLETES. WE FOSTER AUTONOMY ALLOWING THEM TO MAKE DECISIONS AND TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR GROWTH. WE DO THIS WITHIN A COMMUNITY THAT EMBRACES DIVERSITY AND PROMOTES INCLUSIVITY, ENSURING THAT EVERY PLAYER, REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, CAN THRIVE.



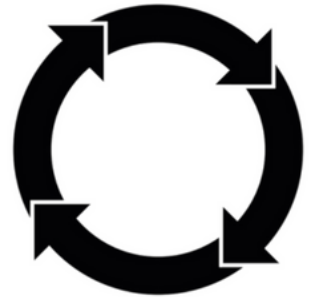
## PLAYER-CENTERED: HOLISTIC

Coaches empower players by encouraging decision-making and problem-solving during play. They design tailored sessions, using guided questions and feedback to support individual growth.



## REALITY-BASED: GAME

Coaches simulate real-game scenarios to sharpen skills and strategies. Players adapt, translating practice into practical game skills.



## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: AUTONOMY

Coaches foster learning through active participation, guiding players in purposeful decisions. Players focus on the game, encouraging instinctive choices.

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# HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

50:50

**Coaches will create a practice environment in which players can expect to be challenged in their decision making. We know that making isolated decisions is much easier than complex decisions.**

**Therefore, we aim for players to have 50:50 success in practice.**

**Both success and failure is part of holistic development as players begin to understand 'why' they succeed or fail in those moments.**

**We encourage failure as well as success.**

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# GAME-BASED

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

**It is more than scrimmaging.**

**It's about experiencing the game in purposefully designed ways to help teach you desired behaviors.**

**These learned behaviors will then translate into the game much easier, but NEVER GUARANTEED!**

**Do we do 'skill' or 'technical' training?  
Yes. Either in the flow of games to help a player learn within context, or externally with recommended skills or mini skill sessions during a training session.**

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# AUTONOMY

## EXPERIENCE

**Experiential learning is all about doing.**

**Learn by experience and under guided-discovery by the coach:**

**“Why did I do that?”**

**“What could I do differently?”**

**“Why did that work?”**

**“How can I do more of that?”**

**“How can I do that better?”**

**Note, these questions are all relative to an action/decision made in the game.**

**Of course, you will also always receive answers from your coach in the form of ‘coaching’.**

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# TRAINING

# FOR GAMES

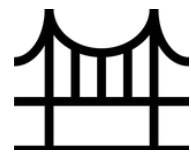
## Practice phase of training 'drills'



These can be more complex moments, with various rules aimed at helping you develop in a certain area of the game (attacking/defending).

We use these to introduce key words or concepts for you to use in games.

...



## Games-Based 'scrimmages'

During game phases of training, we expect you to play like you do at the weekend. Compete. Fight. Challenge.

These games may have rules, so ask questions to understand those rules to be the best you can be.

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# PERIODIZATION

## PHYSICAL READINESS

It's really difficult to go at 100% all of the time. As you grow, you can be at risk for various injuries, specifically from overuse as muscles grow quicker than bones, leading to issues such as Osgood Schlatter or Sever's.

Our intention is to protect you with periodization and 4 mini seasons in your soccer year.

### Summer

- Vikings use the 'summer season' to learn and refine.
- Group and team training focused on skill development, and fundamentals.
- Focus on connection with other Viking players and opportunity to enjoy playing without the pressure of competition.

### Fall

- Competition time.
- Summer work combines with more team tactical training and preparation to compete in games across SF and the Bay Area.
- Games add to the intensity of the season, but also provide valuable experience.

### Winter

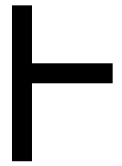
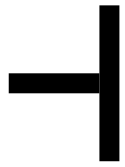
- A similar training experience to summer.
- A chance to reflect on the fall season and focus on individual development.
- Small groups, teams and age group training for exposure to different players and coaches.
- A 'regroup' phase with winter indoor competitions too.

### Spring

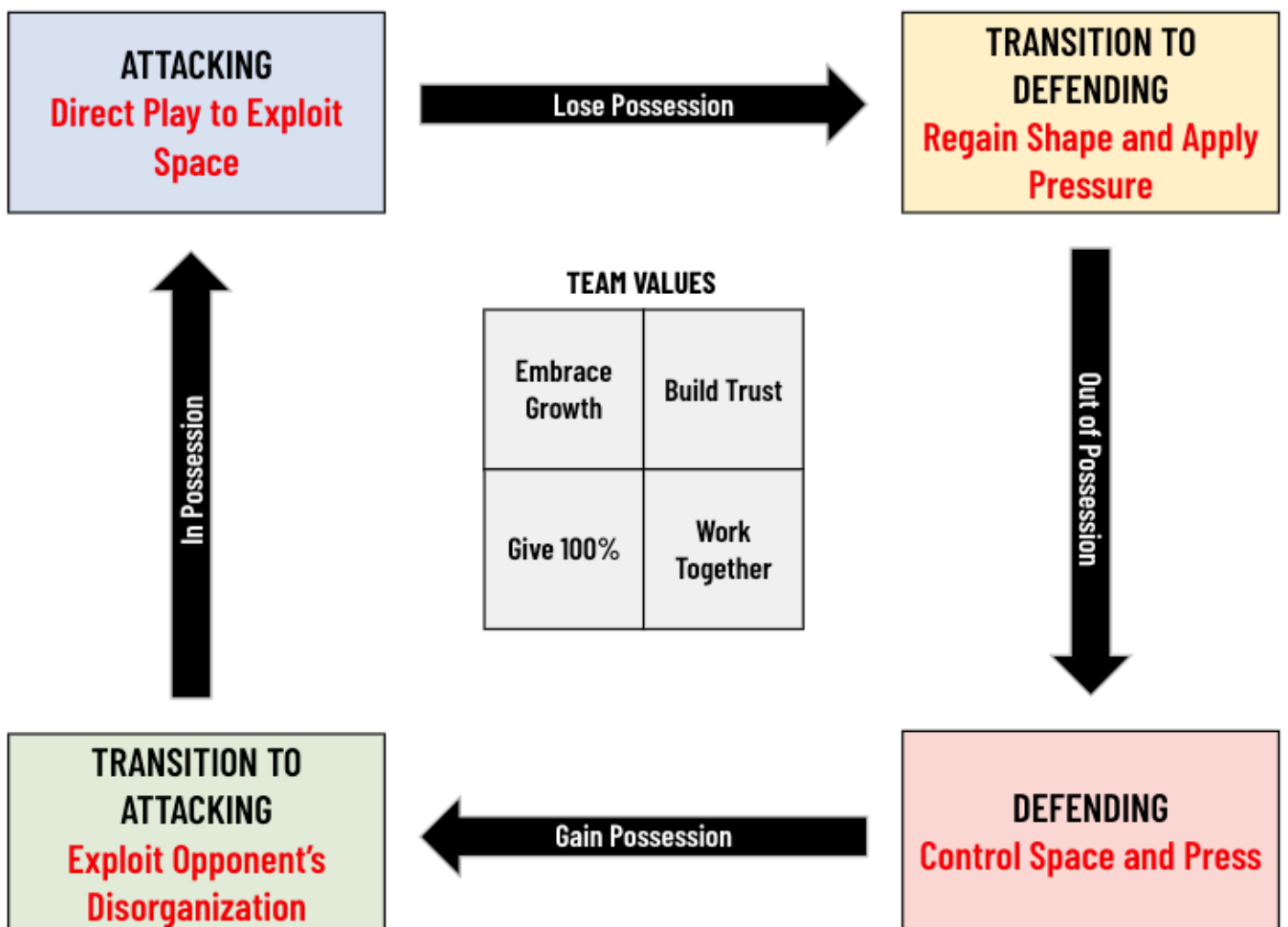
- A return to competition and an opportunity to put 'three seasons' of work into the final 'season' of the soccer year.
- A shorter season, typically with fewer games, but a culmination of training and competing since June will see a developed, and healthy youth soccer player.

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# PLAYING THE GAME



Our playing style emphasizes **direct play to exploit space** behind the opponent's backline and break defensive lines with forward passes. We maintain a **compact shape** in both attack and defense, ensuring balance between possession and spacing. Upon losing possession, we **quickly transition into defensive shape and apply pressure** to regain the ball.



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# PLAYING THE GAME

## Attacking

- Move the ball forward quickly to exploit space behind the opponent's backline.
- Use progressive passes that break lines to create goal-scoring opportunities.
- Utilize width to stretch the opponent's defense, creating space for teammates and numerical advantages.

## Transition to Attack

- Maintain a compact shape to control central spaces and guide the opponent's play.
- Apply an immediate press to win back possession and make the game more predictable.
- Direct the opponent's attack wide, where the team can regain control and limit their options.

## Defending

- Maintain a compact shape to control central spaces and guide the opponent's play.
- Apply an immediate press to win back possession and make the game more predictable.
- Direct the opponent's attack wide, where the team can regain control and limit their options.

## Transition to Defending

- Immediately recover a compact defensive shape, focusing on controlling central spaces.
- Track back quickly, communicating and providing cover for teammates.
- Once shape is restored, apply pressure to disrupt the opponent's attack and force a rushed decision.

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# PLAYER PROFILE



GK



#1



## TRAITS:

- **Leadership:** Direct your teammates and organize the defense with clear communication.
- **Positioning:** Stay alert to block crosses or balls that get past defenders.
- **Bravery:** Confidently face shots and 1v1 situations—dive for the ball!
- **Reading the Game:** Quickly initiate the attack by passing or throwing to teammates.
- **Handling Pressure:** Stay calm under pressure and make smart short or long passes.

## PHYSICAL:

You need strength, quick reactions, and agility to protect the goal from shots in the air and on the ground. Stay ready to move quickly in any direction!



# PLAYER PROFILE

DEF



#2

#3



## TRAITS:

- Positioning: Adjust your body and position to provide support and cover for teammates.
- 1v1 Dominance: Confidently win challenges to maintain or regain possession.
- Attacking Play: Receive, dribble forward, and make quick passes to create chances.
- Supporting Runs: Make overlapping runs to support the attack and create numerical superiorities.

## PHYSICAL:

You need speed, quickness, agility, and endurance to support both in defending and attacking throughout the game.



# PLAYER PROFILE

DEF



#4

#5



## TRAITS:

- Leadership: Organize the defense and guide teammates.
- 1v1 Dominance: Be strong in tackling, heading, and intercepting.
- Positioning: Know where to be and adjust to cover space.
- Composure: Stay calm under pressure and make smart, decisive decisions when attacking.
- Passing Ability: Pass effectively to initiate the attack.

## PHYSICAL:

- Show strength in 1v1 battles, especially in aerial duels.
- Demonstrate speed and agility to keep up with attackers.



# PLAYER PROFILE



**MID.**



**#6**



## TRAITS:

- Control the Central Area: Protect the middle and stop opponents from advancing.
- Positioning: Identify and exploit gaps between the opponent's forwards and midfield to receive and advance the ball.
- Receiving & Passing: Handle pressure, turn in tight spaces, and make smart passes.
- Defensive Balance: Know when to defend or push forward.
- Play Safely: Keep possession—pass forward, switch sides, or hold the ball.

## PHYSICAL:

You need agility to move quickly and change direction to cover space effectively.



# PLAYER PROFILE



## MID



## #8

## #10



### TRAITS:

- **Positioning & Creativity:** Identify and exploit gaps between the opponent's defense and midfield to create scoring opportunities. **Technical Skill:** Receive, turn in tight spaces, and make decisive passes.
- **Decision Making:** Know when to pass forward, switch play, or keep possession.
- **Finishing the Attack:** Break down defenses and finish with a pass or shot.
- **Offensive Balance:** Balance attacking with defensive awareness.

### PHYSICAL:

You need agility to move in tight spaces and endurance to stay involved throughout the game.



# PLAYER PROFILE



## FWD



## #7

## #11



### TRAITS:

- **1v1 Dominance:** Confidently dribble past opponents to create chances and score.
- **Shooting and Crossing:** Quickly shoot or cross, whether cutting inside or staying wide.
- **Aggressive Runs:** Make space with or without the ball through well-timed, decisive runs.
- **Pressing:** Press with speed and intensity to win the ball.
- **Defensive Support:** Assist your fullback by blocking passes and stopping wide attacks.

### PHYSICAL:

- You need speed, quick changes of direction, and body feints to beat defenders.
- Be ready for repeated sprints in attacking and defending transitions.



# PLAYER PROFILE



## FWD



## #9



### TRAITS:

- **Goal Scorer:** Create chances and finishing effectively.
- **Hold Up Play:** Maintain control of the ball under pressure.
- **Smart Runs:** Make varied runs (movement and timing) to get behind defenders or create space.
- **Positioning:** Find dangerous spaces to lose defenders and score.
- **Stay composed under pressure** to receive and pass effectively.
- **Disciplined:** Show strong focus, determination and control.

### PHYSICAL:

You need strength to hold off defenders and explosiveness to make quick, decisive moves.





# GOALS



- What are your 1-2-3 goals for the next 5 years?
  - How old will you be in 5 years?
  - What will you look like as a soccer player who is 5 years older?
  - What will the strengths of this player be?

It can be difficult to think that far forward, but there are some key ages to help -  
14/15 is high school, and high school soccer.  
16/17/18 is high school, but also college prep time.

Now take a moment to work backwards to this year:

## MORE GOALS

- What are your 1-2-3 goals for this season?
  - How will you measure them?
- Examples:
  - Train for 1 extra hour per week this season.
    - backyard for 10 minutes every day - juggling and tight ball control with music on.

Please avoid - 'winning the league' or 'winning a tournament' because there are so many moving parts to this, including other people and we don't have much control over them!

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# GAME FACE

If you had a highlight reel on YouTube, what would we see?

To support you in being ready, we introduce your GAME FACE.

Write down what would be featured in your highlight reel.

Summarize it with a feeling, or an animal, or anything really.

For example, "I think my play is similar to the way a Lion lives". My summary would be 'LION'.

Now tap your badge. Repeat your word.

This is your game face. Do this when:

- Nervous
- Anxious
- Excited
- Uncertain
- You made a mistake
- You hit top bins.

Ultimately, this is about controlling what you can control and remembering that no matter what, the player in the highlight reel is always there, even on off days.

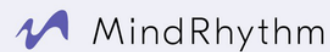


# PLAYER

## WELLNESS



Workshops  
Professional expertise  
Direct referrals for injuries



Vikings players are invited to participate in this clinical trial phase - learning about concussion healing and returning to play.



Player health and safety is paramount to the Vikings, from healthy return to play, to managed playing time as a guest player - we care!

Multi-Sports Partnerships

Experiencing different sports and activities compliments long-term athletic development. The Vikings will provide partnerships, and opportunities for players.

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# EXPECTATIONS



You will be with your coach(es) 3-6 times per week. Therefore, we think it's really important to outline fair expectations of them, like we have of you as a player.

**1 - You can ask your coach questions.**

*Are you unsure on something? Have an idea? Your coach will create a space where your voice can be heard.*

**2 - Your coach will be honest with you.**

*Honesty is the best policy, and your coach will help you improve and guide you through telling you exactly what they see.*

**3 - Your coach will be interested.**

*Want to talk formations, or strategies, or about the latest soccer events? Want to share some cool personal updates? Your coach is interested.*

**4 - Your coach is a professional.**

You will work with different coaches, and every two years you will have a new club coach. You can always expect your coach to treat you fairly and with respect.

# LOOK THE

# ← PART →

HOME



AWAY



TRAINING



HOODIE



Correct kit = ready.

Keep it all in your bag, and inside a ziplock bag so its protected, and ready to go!

Wearing a sweater or a jacket? Put your training shirt over your top layer - you're still a Viking!

White shirts (for all non-recreational teams) can also be worn for home games, but mostly away - these will be worn.



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# THANK YOU



## Contact Information

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